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## MEMORIES OF A BUSY LIFE

GENERAL CHARLES KING

BOYHOOD IN OLD MILWAUKEE<sup>1</sup>

It may be of interest to refer to the cost of living in the fifties in Milwaukee as compared with present day prices. Milk was delivered at our kitchen door by a worthy Irish woman, Mrs. Powers, at five cents a quart measure. It cost considerably more in blood and bodily wear and tear on those occasions when I was required to venture down to the Third Ward<sup>2</sup> to get it when supplies ran short. The Irish to a man seemed fond of my father, in spite of differences in politics, the sons of the Emerald Isle being of the Democratic persuasion; but between young Ireland and young America there was perennial warfare.

Vegetables, as a rule, were bought at the German Market, or at Reed's or Harshaw's on East Water Street, nearly opposite the old Walker, now Kirby House. Alexander Mitchell and Hans Crocker raised the best fruits to be found in or about the city, those which came up by boat from Chicago being scarce and high. Munkwitz and Layton were our two butchers, and a quarter of a dollar, cash in hand, would enable me to carry home enough mutton chops for the family dinner. Mother's rules sent me early to bed, and I started in life as an early riser. When I found a dime on the corner of the little washstand in my room, it

<sup>1</sup> In a biographical sketch of his father, General Rufus King, published in the June, 1921 issue of this magazine, the author has told of his ancestry and of the establishment of his father's family at Milwaukee in 1845. The opening installment of the present article, relating memories of boyhood days in Milwaukee, is but a portion of a much longer statement which General King has dictated, dealing with recollections of this period in his career.—Editor.

<sup>2</sup> The old Third Ward was preëminently the resort of Milwaukee's Irish population and was familiarly characterized as the "Bloody Third." In 1850 there were slightly more than three thousand natives of Ireland in Milwaukee, in a total population of twenty thousand. The Irish at that time far outnumbered every other alien group in Milwaukee except the German-born.—Editor.

meant whitefish for breakfast, and as soon as I had dressed I would trudge away to the head of Mason Street, and there find the fishermen's boats just in from Whitefish Bay. That dime would give me the choice of the biggest and finest fish, many of them still flopping about in the bottoms of the boats. The fishermen would run a stout cord through the gills, loop it over the end of the big stick I carried for the purpose, and then with that stick over my shoulder, I would lug homeward the prize of the lot. Three dollars would hardly buy such a fish today.

Before quitting the old King's-Corner crowd,<sup>3</sup> let me tell you how they "sized up" in later life. It is worth the telling. "Rude" were we, perhaps, "in speech" and sports, neither blasphemous nor obscene, but certainly unpolished, and many a time did mother point out to me the inelegance of our language. One day a discussion, somewhat heated, was going on, and in the midst of it a dear old lady descended upon the group. She was my Sunday-school teacher and I honored her, but most of the crowd knew her only by name. Earnestly and impressively she addressed herself to the gang in general, to the excited debaters in particular, whereat, in his mingling of chagrin and embarrassment, the curly-headed future lieutenant general<sup>4</sup> of the Army burst into a guffaw of laughter, and the main culprit, the blue-eyed, fair-haired future rear admiral<sup>5</sup> of our Navy stuck his tongue in his cheek, twiddled his thumbs and dared to wink at his nearest neighbor. It was too much for our lady's dignity. Turning abruptly, she entered our house and, addressing my mother by the name only Albanians and intimates called her, said, impressively, "If you don't get your boy away from this Godless, graceless gang and send

<sup>3</sup> The family residence, which gave name to "King's Corner," stood at the northeast corner of Mason and Van Buren streets.—Editor.

<sup>4</sup> General Arthur MacArthur.—Editor.

<sup>5</sup> Rear Admiral James K. Cogswell. As executive officer under Captain Clarke, he brought the *Oregon* around South America from San Francisco to Santiago to share in the destruction of Admiral Cervera's fleet in the battle of July, 1898.—Editor.

him where he can be among gentlemen, you will rue it to your dying day."

In September '58 I was divorced from the "gang," so-called, and in course of time entered Columbia College, New York, and of the forty very excellent young gentlemen matriculated with me at Columbia, not one, either in national, state or municipal affairs, ever won distinction; whereas, of the "Godless, graceless gang" who gathered day after day at the old corner, or were in close touch with us, one rose to be a senator of the United States, four of them generals in our Army, one of the four (MacArthur, my chum and next-door neighbor from '54 to '58) becoming lieutenant general, the highest rank then attainable. Two became rear admirals of the Navy, one became head of the Society of Physicians and Surgeons of Connecticut. Three became eminent in the law (one of them a judge at Duluth); one a great insurance man, a prominent author and leader of affairs in New York City. Three others, gallant fellows whose names should not be forgotten, fell, heading their companies ("Mandy" Townsend and Billy Mitchell) or as regimental adjutant (Wilkie Bloodgood). Still another was shot dead in the charge at Fredericksburg (John Parkinson). Another still (one of the staunchest fighters of our number in boy days), after serving as lieutenant of artillery in our great war, became eminent in science, especially biology, George Peckham. Others prospered in business and social affairs, as did the Cramers, and only two or three never seemed to amount to much. Now, how do you account for that?

In connection with days at Anthon's school<sup>6</sup> in New York, where I finished my preparation for Columbia, there is one point worth mention. My allowance, spending money, etc., was fifty cents per week, paid on Saturday, out of which

<sup>6</sup> Professor Charles Anthon, a noted classical scholar of his day, was professor of Greek and Latin at Columbia and head of the grammar school then attached to the college.—Editor.

I was expected to buy my shoes, gloves, and luncheons. If it had not been for the thoughtful kindness of a young uncle, one of the first of our tribe to give his life in the Civil War days, I should have fared very ill. As it was, I seldom wore gloves, I speedily wore out my shoes, and my lunch was often only a doughnut; but we had famous breakfasts and dinners at my grandfather's table,<sup>7</sup> and my grandmother wondered at my appetite.

Returning, however, to those Milwaukee days, before saying good-bye to them as far as boyhood was concerned, I should say that documentary evidence in our possession goes to prove that before my fifth birthday maternal castigations were frequent and deserved. In a letter to father, who was in Washington in April, 1849, written presumably by request, but from my dictation, by Norman J. Emmons, it appears that I had been soundly whipped the previous day, "which made me a good boy ever since." As this covered a period of twenty-four hours, the reformation lasted apparently longer than usual. There seemed to be no limit to the mischief into which my propensity for exploration would lead me, and in father's absence, nurse, cook, even my Spartan mother, were sometimes too few to frighten such an arrant young vagrant. On the other hand, when he was at home, all that father had to do, no matter how furious a tantrum might be going on, was simply to order "Attention," and kicks and screams ceased at the word. I owed instant soldier obedience to my soldier father and accorded it to no one else.

Continuing that letter: "Yesterday I ran away, taking the two Cady boys wiv me way down to Higby's pier. I took them wiv me so I would not get lost." And as Higby's pier was about opposite Huron Street, and we lived on Mason, the adventure called for stern reprisals. Yet it wasn't forty-eight hours before the next excursion, and this

<sup>7</sup> Charles King, president of Columbia College.—Editor.

time I was seized by father's partner, Mr. Fuller, aided by the Mr. Emmons aforementioned, and borne kicking and struggling into the cellar, and there headed up in an old apple barrel, an episode the neighborhood did not soon permit me to forget.

Two months later we were at West Point—father, mother, sister, nurse and I—and then came the change, possibly for the better. Between General Scott, the tallest and most martial figure at the Academy, the stately drum major, and the soldierly cadet adjutant (Quincy A. Gilmore) I could not quite decide, but one of the three it was my daily habit from that time on to personate, I am told, for several years thereafter. It was 1851 before I could care for anything else except the fire department. Then Alexander Mitchell gave me my first lift in life—to the back of a villainous, little, black Shetland stallion, who had more tricks and vices than any four-legged brute I ever afterward knew. Beppo and our beautiful black Newfoundland, Nero, came to me about the same time.

In those days New Year's calls were made by every wide-awake citizen on all the ladies of his acquaintance, beginning somewhere about midday, and keeping it up, sometimes repeating, until dark. Housewives made ample preparation for this annual visitation; a bounteous table was generally set and a sideboard or table with its bowl of punch, its decanters of sherry, Madeira, and spirits. Whiskey was too cheap and plebeian a drink for such occasions (it retailed for something like forty cents a quart and cost less, probably, than ten cents a gallon), but old Otard brandy was much in demand. Father had some rare old Madeira that had been in the cellars of his grandfather when the latter was United States minister to England. By early afternoon on New Year's day many prominent citizens would be able no longer to distinguish between sherry and Madeira or between good wine and bad, and mother did hate to see that

fine Madeira wasted. A few years and it was all gone, all but two boxes of a dozen bottles each that had been especially set aside and labeled, never to be opened until the weddings of myself and my sister, and nothing would induce mother to permit that wine to be used.

She might just as well have done so, for, with father's books, papers, and some of the old family relics, those boxes were stored on the second floor of Mr. Emmons' barn, which stood in the alley way between Mason and Oneida streets, and Van Buren and Cass, when, father being with the Army in Virginia, mother and sister in New York, and I at West Point, the King's Corner residence was occupied by Robert Eliot. One wintry night thieves broke into the barn from the alley way, dumped into a sleigh such of the books and belongings as they thought they could sell, drank what they could of that priceless Madeira, and then in sheer, brutal wantonness, dashed the other bottles to bits against the walls. There was no wine at our weddings, at least at mine, that could compare with that hundred-year-old Madeira.

#### WEST POINT YEARS

About my appointment-at-large to West Point in 1862 various versions have been published in Wisconsin papers. I had almost begged in 1860 that grandfather should ask President Buchanan for me, as the President was permitted that year to name rather an unusually large number to enter in 1861. I longed to go. I was just sixteen and fully fit to pass the examination, but grandfather and mother had had their visions of the law, and certain elderly, maiden aunts of mother's had long been insistent that I should be educated for the ministry, whereas the only career for which I ever had the faintest aptitude was that of the soldier.

They might far better have yielded in 1860. It would have made a vast difference in my future fortunes, because between the graduation of the classes of 1865 and 1866 the

Army was filled up with volunteers from civil life. In '65 the West Point cadets were all graduated as first lieutenants and several of them became captains in two years. We who were graduated in '66 entered at the foot of the list of second lieutenants, and many of our number marched meekly in the line of file closers until they were grandfathers. Some men in my class did not receive their captaincy until they had served as lieutenants for thirty years or more. Had my mother dreamed of this, I have not a doubt she would have consented long before she did. Father, however, would say nothing, because he and I both realized that we were under obligations to my grandfather, who was preparing me for and sending me through college. All the same, he knew my longing and sympathized with me.

The war settled it, and after my few months with brigade headquarters at the front,<sup>8</sup> grandfather and mother both changed their views, and Lincoln was importuned on my behalf at a time when he had thousands of applications for the ten cadetships in his gift. Nevertheless mine was promised me through Secretary Seward late in the fall of '61, yet when the names were announced in March, '62, that of William H. Upham, of Wisconsin, appeared instead of mine. Upham had been shot through the lungs and left for dead on the field of first Bull Run, when his regiment, the Second Wisconsin, fell back with the rest of the defeated army; was mourned as dead at his Racine home, yet after a time in Libby prison, he recovered of his desperate wound; was sent back to Washington, exchanged, and with Senator Doolittle to champion his cause, begged the President to send him to West Point. He would be twenty-one in August. He must enter in June or not at all. Such was the law. I was only seventeen and could afford to wait three years, if need be, and what was my claim

<sup>8</sup> On this service see the writer's account in the June, 1921 issue of this magazine.—Editor.



beside that of a wounded hero of our first big battle? Father was then commanding his division far out at the front, but the President knew what his answer would be if the case were referred to him: his boy would step aside at once that the more deserving applicant should have the prize.

It almost broke my heart, but I wrote a glowing, boyish letter to Secretary Seward to say that if it had to be done again, I would never stand in the way of any Wisconsin soldier who had such claims as Upham; that letter was shown to the President, what he said I shall not record here beyond this: "That boy goes to West Point the first chance I get," and that chance came in May. It was found that one of his appointees was just too young. Instantly he turned to Mr. Seward, as he said, "Get the address of General King's youngster." Long years afterwards there was found in the files at the War Department and sent to me, in Secretary Seward's own handwriting, the original of the despatch: "To General Rufus King, Fredericksburg. Send your son's full name and address to General Thomas [General Thomas was then the Adjutant General of the Army] for West Point." Two days later my grandfather delightedly handed the formal War Department document to me. And so it resulted that among Lincoln's ten appointees that beautiful June, Wisconsin had two representatives, and Upham and I entered together. Moreover, we were graduated higher on the final roll in '66 than any others of that immortal ten, several of whom, however, failed entirely, among them the son of one of Lincoln's cabinet,<sup>9</sup> another the son of a famous admiral,<sup>10</sup> another the nephew of a most distinguished senator, another still a wonderful fellow, who, it was claimed, had walked barefoot all the way from Lake Champlain to Washington, to see the President in person and tell his story of years

<sup>9</sup> The allusion is to Attorney-general Bates.—Editor.

<sup>10</sup> Admiral Worden.—Editor.

of hardship and struggle. But, poor fellow, though he got the appointment, he never could "see any sense in Algebra," and had to drop out.

President Lincoln's only visit to West Point was paid one beautiful day in June, before his appointees were in uniform. He came to the Point, he said, to pay his respects to General Scott, who was living there in retirement, then he strode over to the barracks and sent for his ten boys. Tall, angular, and ungainly, as said some spectators, with a silk hat of exaggerated height, nevertheless, when he put his great hand on my head and looked kindly down into my flushed and boyish face, saying, "Well, son, you have got your wish at last," I could well nigh have worshipped him. It was my last look at that indescribable face. But on a mild April morning three years later, I stood on the stone post of the old sun-dial in the area of the cadet barracks and read aloud to the corps of cadets the details of the President's assassination the night before at Ford's Theater. One or two officers had passed among the boys saying, "Go to your quarters. Go to your quarters. This is all irregular"—as it was. It was the first and only time in my life that I ever saw an instance of an officer or instructor at West Point being utterly ignored by the cadets. The word had gone round that Lincoln had been assassinated, and at last an officer handed me the newspaper, saying, "Read it to them." I shall never forget the scores of white and grief-stricken young faces staring up at me as I read through those three columns; but at the end I broke away, ran to my room, and throwing myself down upon my bed, cried like a child.

The end of June found us Fourth classmen in camp, most of us in uniform. The entrance examination in those days was a bagatelle, so far as mathematics, geography, grammar, and knowledge of English were concerned—purposely so that the poorest lad might have an equal chance with

the son of the wealthy; but on the other hand, the physical requirements were exacting. Army life in the old days called for a sound constitution and sturdy physique.

In July my dear old grandfather made his appearance, and beamed with delight to see how well I looked. "It is the very place for you," said he. How I wished he might have been able to realize that two years before! Then in September my mother came. It was her first visit to West Point since '49; but the old hotel was unchanged, and the band was almost as good as it had been in days when it was not so easy to lure our best musicians away, with promise of better pay and employment. The old leader had greatly admired her piano playing, and had arranged for her two of the finest marches that were in great vogue at the end of the Mexican war, but in '62 they were out of date and forgotten. "It is the very place for you," were her words, before she had been there half an hour, and yet how long she had fought against my going!

Her greatest concern was whether the cadet pay of \$30 a month was going to be sufficient to keep me out of debt. Before the war a cadet could live on it in spite of the fact that out of that \$30 he had to pay for barbers, baths, belts, bedding, board (never less than \$15 a month), books, brushes, caps, clothing of every kind, dancing lessons, gloves, gauntlets, shoes, shoe-blackening, drawing instruments, colors, crayon, paper, everything in fact, except room rent, fuel, and medical attendance. We were taxed for the band fund, barrack furniture, lithographing, hops (the evening dances held thrice a week in July and August only); and as prices began to bound in '61 and to soar in '62, while gold reached \$2.90 in '63 or '64, mother's fears were well founded. Our uniform coats cost \$11 in '62 and \$33 a year later—an inferior gray cloth at that. Uniform shoes were \$2.66, made to order and a perfect fit, in '62, but were up to \$6 and \$7 within another year. Mother had reason to worry.

Nothing but her wonderful economy and management had carried us through the dismal year or two that followed the panic of '57, which wrecked the *Sentinel* and my father's fortunes. Indeed, throughout all the years that followed it was her clear vision and business head that enabled him to meet the cost of a diplomatic career at Rome on a salary of \$7,500 a year. We owed everything to her, as father wrote, admiringly.

By the autumn of my second year at West Point, \$30 a month would no longer begin to provide for the needs of a cadet on military duty. Two-thirds of the corps were so much in debt that they could not even buy shoes, and had to be excused from all military duty. Parades and drills had been suspended because of this fact, and for the first time in the history of the Academy, cadets were authorized to send for and receive money from home, to help them out of their financial plight.

The pinch of poverty had begun to be felt the previous year, when a strange occurrence marred the rigid routine of West Point's military system. Our doors had no locks. We lived two in a room, in the gray stone barracks, some rooms, indeed, had but a single occupant. No one but cadets, the officers on duty over them, the Irish servitors who scrubbed out the floors, and the drum boy "orderlies" were permitted to enter the barracks, yet in the autumn of '62 thefts of money, watches, drawing instruments, etc., were of frequent occurrence. A kleptomaniac was at work in "A" Company; it was not long before he was caught, confessed, and, under the care of a guard of three or four dragoon troopers, was escorted to the south dock. There he was overtaken by a daring party of a dozen cadets, of the First, Second, and Third classes, headed by the cadet adjutant—a splendid, soldierly fellow from Indiana. The guards were overpowered, the prisoner taken from them, tarred and feathered, and turned loose. It created a profound impres-

sion at the time and bore fruit later. The adjutant, my great admiration then and to his dying day, was reduced to the ranks, and became my file leader in Company "A." The cadet who succeeded him as adjutant was a devout Christian, and became one of the professors of the Academy and was long one of its leading spirits as well as one of my warmest friends. He followed the culprit by letter, urged him to conquer his propensity, aided him in the gradual restoration of every dollar's worth he had stolen, brought about his entire reformation, and several years later saw him again upon his feet, a respected citizen, invited to West Point to receive the right hand of fellowship of certain officers there on duty who as cadets had been the victims of his malady in '62.

In the spring of 1863 two members of my class were suddenly and summarily spirited off the post and dropped from the rolls of the Academy, one of them for having helped himself to some note paper, the other for more varied bits of petty larceny; and then it was two years or more, the summer of '65, after Appomattox and peace before we had to face that situation again. During the summer encampment, the complaints of stolen money and valuables became so frequent that the commandant finally sent for the five cadets highest in rank in the battalion, the four captains and the adjutant, and impressively addressed them: "This thing is a disgrace to you," he said, "and in my time we never would have rested until we had discovered the culprit and given him a coat of tar and feathers." It stung us to renewed effort. All manner of devices were resorted to. A number of treasury notes contributed for the purpose, five and ten dollar bills, were secretly marked, and these left as bait, promptly disappeared, still we found no trace of the culprit. It was not until the corps returned to barracks in September that the thefts ceased for a very short time, and then later in the

fall began again; once more the commandant harangued some of the cadet officers, when again our efforts were renewed. Again we marked a few five and ten dollar treasury notes, and left them on the open shelves of our soldier's substitute for bureaus—the clothes press—and they quickly disappeared.

"If you young men cannot discover the culprit," said our commandant, "no one else can." Then came to me one of the most painful experiences of my life. I had marched as rear rank man from the early autumn of '62 until June, '63 of the model soldier of the cadet battalion—he, who as adjutant had been the leader in the tarring and feathering episode of September, and had suffered reduction to the ranks. I was now, as adjutant of the corps in 1865, to follow still further in his lead.

With the class that entered in June, '63, came a few young men who had seen service with the volunteers at the front. One of these throughout the two months of camp had occupied the tent next to mine in the street of Company "A." In those days the newcomers were always required to make up the tents and bedding of the upper classmen, to see that the water buckets were filled, the rifles and brasses polished, etc.; this particular "plebe" had to do his share, but never for me. Having been at the front myself, I could not exact service of such men. He was a burly fellow, strong and heavily built, and toward the end of the camp had quite a following among his classmates.

In July we had had an excitement. The great draft riots were in full swing in New York, and such regular soldiers as we had in the engineer, cavalry, and artillery detachments had been hurriedly sent to the threatened city, leaving the Academy to be guarded by the First, Third and Fourth classes of the cadet corps, and a score of superannuated veterans. The Second class was away on cadet furlough, the Fourth not yet fully in uniform. The First

was only twenty-seven strong, the Third was only about sixty, when the commandant received the startling news that a number of Southern sympathizers had chartered a steamboat in New York, and, several hundred strong, were coming up the Hudson that very night to burn and destroy the Academy. They were to be aided by the draft-resisting miners at Cornwall, just above us, and the foundry-men at Cold Spring, across the river.

Our 12-pounder "Napoleon" guns were at once run down to the north and south docks, with shell and shrapnel in abundance. Cadet Captain Allen was detailed to command the north, and Cadet Lieutenant Mackenzie (Wisconsin born) selected for the south dock, each authorized to pick the cadets to the number of one corporal and twelve privates, to man these guns and guard the docks, while the rest of the little battalion remained midway between them at camp, furnished, for the first time in West Point history, with ball cartridges for action. The corporal chosen by Mackenzie was Arthur Cranston, who had served in an Ohio regiment in western Virginia. The corporal chosen by Captain Allen, to the surprise of almost everybody, certainly myself, was myself, about the youngest looking lad that wore chevrons in the cadet battalion. We had a night of thrilling expectation, but the attack was called off. The incident, however, started me upward on the ladder of promotion, and to my surprise, seemed to anger the new cadet in the adjoining tent. I had treated him with entire courtesy, but his manner to me became ugly and truculent, if not threatening.

Three months later, a number of young officers and non-commissioned officers of volunteers were selected by the generals at the front to fill the vacancies of the southern congressional districts. Many of them came in uniform, and among them, along in October, to my delight, was Charley Powell, whom I had left at Chain Bridge, a corporal

in Company "B," Fifth Wisconsin (the Milwaukee Zouaves), who, after all the fighting on the Peninsula, at Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg, had risen to be sergeant major of the Fifth; in the uniform of that grade he reported at West Point, and the very night of his arrival I sought him out and took him to my room for a chat. Fourth classmen in those days never entered the room of an "old cadet," except by invitation, and I was astonished and indignant when presently there burst into my room three or four Fourth classmen, led by this truculent next-tent neighbor of camp days, and it was he who ordered this sergeant major, his superior still in military rank, for they were "conditional" cadets only, and the guest of their senior in the cadet battalion, a non-commissioned officer at that—to stand attention and salute his betters. In an instant I had hustled them out, giving the leader an especial tongue lashing, which he bitterly resented.

"I always hated you," he said, "from the day they made you a corporal," and yet to classmates of his own who pointed out to him that he had been treated with far more consideration than he deserved, he admitted that he could give no reason for his antipathy.

Except when on duty, I never spoke to him again. A year later I had become first sergeant of that company wherein he was still a private; by that time he had made many enemies in his own class. A number of them "cut him dead," as was the expression, and when he came back from cadet furlough in 1865, he could find no man to live with him. He had deliberately forced a quarrel upon one of the most courteous and gentlemanly of his classmates, and in the fight that ensued, with his brutal strength had hurled his slight opponent to the floor, and then, applying an epithet that is never tolerated at West Point, had said, "Now I have got you where I've been meaning to get



you for a year past," and was proceeding to hammer him, when dragged off and in turn set upon by a man of his own weight, and from that day stood degraded in the eyes of the entire corps; his classmates, especially, held him in contempt.

Then one day when the battalion was at dinner, a member of his class searched that unfortunate's room and found some of the marked money secreted between the leaves of his dictionary. The cadet officers, except the officer-of-the-day, were instantly assembled, and selected a captain, a first lieutenant, and an especially popular and prominent cadet private of the senior class to confront the friendless man with the evidence and hear his defense, if he had any. I could have wished that the council had chosen three of our brainiest—the men highest in scholarship and in years. But in ten minutes the examiners were back, all excitement. The man was guilty beyond all doubt, they said. He had denied the thefts, but had contradicted himself in a dozen ways and had obviously lied over and again. Then came the recollection of the commandant's words, and then a report, later found to be true, that already the Second class had learned what was going on, and were making preparation to seize and tar and feather him. Older heads warned the council this would never do. Hating him as they did, the chances were that they might seriously injure him. It was decided that the Second class should be kept in check and the culprit drummed out, army fashion, at evening parade. This ceremony was, in winter, held in the area of barracks, the four companies simply closing on the center, with the adjutant in command. The field music played the "retreat," the evening gun was fired, the adjutant published the orders, read out the delinquencies, and then dismissed the command.

And that dull, dark afternoon, just as usual, the drums beat, the rolls were called, the companies closed on center,

the retreat was sounded, the gun fired, and calling the battalion to attention I read the orders of the day, and then looked along that rigid, silent, gray-clad line. Whether I fully believed in the guilt of the poor fellow could make no difference now—the cadet officers in council had so declared him and adjudged “drumming out” as his punishment. I, as adjutant, was their executive.

In a voice distinctly audible to every man in ranks, I announced as warning to the Second classmen, who were many of them quivering with eagerness: “In the event of anything of an unusual nature taking place at this formation any man who attempts to leave his place in ranks will at once be placed in arrest by any one of the cadet officers.” At this the captains and lieutenants stepped to the front of their companies and faced their men. Only once had I ever seen those young faces turn so white, and that was the April morning months before, when it had been my lot to read to the stricken corps the details of our beloved President’s assassination.

The door of the third hall opened, and in civilian dress, with the placard “Thief” on his back, the accused cadet was led by his three inquisitors to the right of the line; the drums and fifes struck up “The Rogue’s March,” and down the front of those quivering ranks they led him around to the left and rear until nearly behind the center, then bade him go, and as though in dread of his life, he darted away down the hill to the south dock, while, with a voice that must have trembled a bit, I read the two pages of delinquencies, holding the battalion to silence and to ranks until the culprit was safe from pursuit. Then and not until then, I ordered, “Dismiss your companies.”

With something almost like a scream, the whole Second class and many of the Third sped madly in pursuit, but were brought up standing by the sight of the superintendent, General Cullum, coming up the road. I, meantime, had

gone to the quarters of the commandant and briefly reported: "Sir, the thief was found at half past one, drummed out at parade, and is now probably across the river." He, looking dazed for a moment, said: "You have taken a grave responsibility on your shoulders, and then, perhaps, recalled what he had said as to what the corps would have done in his day, for not another word did he utter, but, taking his cap, went forth in search of the superintendent.

That night an officer with a guard was sent in pursuit, and brought the terrified victim back. A court of inquiry was speedily ordered, counsel assigned the accused, and the report after full investigation was to the effect that the evidence was inconclusive, and their recommendation was, as a matter of course, that the "ring leaders" be brought to trial before General Court Martial.

That was a solemn Christmas-tide for me. It was decided that only four cadets should be made examples of, the adjutant, of course, and the three who escorted the prisoner down the line, "as a degraded criminal," said Mr. Secretary Stanton, in his ominous order. The details for the court named nine distinguished officers, with Colonel William Sinclair as judge advocate. We felt that no sentence less than dismissal could be awarded, yet believed with reason that it would be accompanied by a recommendation for clemency. We determined to plead guilty to the charge and throw ourselves on the mercy of the court; half of the members, at least, knew the circumstances that had led to our action, and, come weal, come woe, we vowed that no one of our number, even in self-defense would bring into the case the inciting words of our beloved, but most impulsive commandant.

An odd thing was that though one of the "escort" was a cadet captain, and another a cadet first lieutenant, they were arraigned simply as cadets. I alone, having been in command and responsible for all that took place, was tried in my official grade as adjutant of the battalion of cadets.

It was midwinter when the court assembled. Mine was the first case called, and I pleaded guilty to the charge, called on the superintendent and commandant to testify as to my character and bearing as a cadet; read my statement to the court, in the presence of quite a number of spectators; took all the blame; expressed the sorrow and humiliation I felt at having administered this degrading punishment to a man declared innocent of the crime attributed to him, and said nothing about the actual offenses which had made him the Ishmael of the corps. To my surprise there were tears in the eyes of two members of the court and of some of the spectators.

Then followed a very unhappy month in spite of the fact that several officers took it upon themselves to come to me with cheering words. By this time most people on the Point and not a few at Washington had heard through cadet relations the inside facts, so to speak, of the victim's previous record, and, in some way, that we were not entirely without the urging of superior authority in the course that we took. But by this time I believed that a far worse man, some desperate criminal in the corps, had hidden that marked money in the dictionary in order to throw suspicion from himself and fix the crime on the man whom the corps would be most ready to believe guilty of anything. In my self-reproach and humiliation I had, as I say, come to believe him innocent. This, however, his class absolutely refused to do. To the day of their graduation and many of them to the day of his death, long years later, held to it that he was the thief.

But a reaction had set in that was of vast aid to the four cadets who had been made the official burden bearers—the scapegoats of the corps. Secretary Stanton was said to have been exasperated because the courts, the superintendent, and the commandant had actually pleaded for mercy for us. I fully expected at least to be suspended from

rank and pay an entire year and so did Frank Soulé of California, the handsome captain of Company "D." It seemed a long time before the orders came from Washington but they finally arrived. All four were sentenced to be dismissed from the military service of the United States, but in the case of the three committee men, having acted under orders of the adjutant, and having received the favorable recommendation of the court, the execution of the sentence was suspended until further orders. They, also, remained on probation in the meantime. In my case, said the Secretary of War, because of the earnest recommendation of the court, concurred in by the superintendent and commandant, "based upon high character and hitherto excellent conduct the sentence is remitted." "But," said the Secretary, "however honorable may have been his motives, Cadet King has been guilty of a grave offense, and it is ordered that he be deprived of his position as Adjutant." So Soulé went back to the command of his company, Wright to the second in command of his, and I following the lead of my admired adjutant of the winter of '62, now, in '65 my instructor in civil and military engineering, went back to the ranks of Company "A."

There was quite a little feeling about it in the corps, a disposition to make me a sort of martyr, but though long saddened and humbled by the consciousness of having wronged a fellow-man, I knew that my punishment was light. No matter what "Old Harry" had said in his excitement and exasperation, I should have had sense enough to know it was contrary to law and order.

Now, strange things resulted from that episode. First, the victim himself lived the life of a recluse to the day of his graduation, eighteen months thereafter; execrated and often abused by his classmates, he would resent no insult. He lived dumbly, meekly, and alone, and he must have gone through hell or purgatory. He became a totally

changed man. Solitude, self-examination, and study did their work. He was assigned to a regiment, married, and took his young wife to a far western station, where the story followed him, and the few West Pointers at first would not speak to him. But he became a model duty officer, reserved, dignified, studious. He lived to win the respect of his fellow-men, and to die a devout Christian.

It is believed also that shortly before his death he was made aware that two or three West Pointers actually knew the real villain in the tragic story. Strangely enough, he was the only other cadet with whom I had a lasting difference. From the summer of 1865 I had refused to speak to him. He was secretly married, it seems, and the woman blackmailed him. He was driven nearly mad by her threatening to announce their marriage unless he kept her supplied with money. This would at once have ended his career as a cadet and his future as an officer. He had to steal to meet her demands. He went stark mad one wintry night, a year after the drumming-out affair; he had given indications of insanity twice before. He wandered off cadet limits, and was brought back exhausted, and while in hospital, under pledge of secrecy, told his miserable story to a fellow cadet, and killed himself a year after his graduation.

An odd sequel to that distressing affair came in June. There was a great shortage of young graduates of West Point, so many had been killed or crippled for life in the war, so many promoted, that the superintendent found it necessary to ask of the War Department that he might select two of the graduating class for duty as instructors in tactics during the summer encampment. It was granted, and the two cadets selected to reappear as officers and instructors within a fortnight of their graduation were the man who took my place as adjutant and my dethroned self. I hardly knew how to thank the superintendent and commandant, for it was the latter who made the choice.

## SERVICE WITH THE REGULARS

It was a beautiful detail and a very delightful duty, but it might have been better had I spent that summer on leave, as I had planned, in Wisconsin, for I had not seen my home since 1860 and longed to be there again. Father, mother, sister, and grandfather and his family were all in Italy, father being still minister to Rome, but there were a few of my kith and kin, and many a dear old chum, living in Milwaukee, and I wanted to see the "graceless, Godless gang" again before going in the autumn to join the light battery, to which, as second lieutenant I had been assigned. Matters had become turbulent in New Orleans. There had been a "massacre" of negro legislators at the Mechanics Institute, on Dryades Street, where the Gruenewald Hotel now stands, and the battery commander urged my joining without delay. The trouble was over, but he was short of officers. I spent only a week in Milwaukee that fall; but in the fall of '67, while the great epidemic of yellow fever was in full blast, I was on sick leave in the North, forbidden by the War Department's orders to return until frost set in. Living at Alexander Mitchell's commodious home, where the Wisconsin Club now stands, I had a most enjoyable visit until near Thanksgiving, when ordered to New York to accompany by sea a big batch of recruits going to Louisiana and Texas to help fill the gaps made by the fever.

Then came a rather lively year in New Orleans, the political campaign of '68 and a series of riots in the Crescent City between the whites and blacks. It was that fall of '68 that Gatling guns, though invented during the Civil War, were first mounted and put in use in the Army, two of them, with their carriages, caissons, harness, etc., and complete equipment being sent to our battery, where they were duly horsed and manned, and the command fell to me, the junior lieutenant on duty. It got to be great fun

after a while, when we had learned the use of these "bullet squirters," as they were called. We were moved into the city and stationed in a big, abandoned cotton press out on Canal Street, when the election drew near and the rioting became frequent, our orders were to hitch every evening and stand to horse, ready for business. It wouldn't be long before somewhere in the downtown districts, the sudden crackle of revolver and shotgun would announce that a riot had broken out, and send us at swift trot, rattling away over the block pavement, for all the world like four fine fire companies acting as one, bound for the scene of disturbance. Never once had we to fire, though often it was "Front into battery" at the gallop. The rioters, black and white, had an idea those guns would belch lead that would sweep the streets from curb to curb, and the crowds scattered like sheep at the sound of our bugle, and the cry "Here come the Gatlings!" All the same we were glad when it was over, and early the following spring I was ordered to Fort Hamilton, New York harbor, acting as post adjutant for a while, and in August being for a second time detailed in the department of tactics at West Point—duties that I rejoiced in and that kept me actively employed drilling, drilling, riding and afoot, day after day, and rowing between times on the Hudson, developing health, strength, and physique that stood me in good stead in trying years that were before me.

When Congress cut down the Army in '69, I grabbed at a chance to transfer into the Cavalry, the service I best loved. In the fall of '71 I joined the Fifth Regiment on the plains of the Platte Valley, had a glorious hunt or two with Buffalo Bill, our chief scout, then when our colonel was ordered to New Orleans to command the reestablished Department of the Gulf, with his old volunteer rank of major general, he took me with him as aide-de-camp, possibly because he thought I knew more about affairs in Louisiana than any other of his subalterns.



Then came three very eventful years and duties that were far from agreeable. The "carpet-bag government," so-called, was in full control in Louisiana, and presently split into two factions—two legislatures and, almost, two governors.

It is too much like ancient history to go back to those troubled times. We are unlikely ever again to see states divided as was Louisiana, with the old residents, impaired in fortune in almost every case, disfranchised and holding aloof in dignified silence and retirement. We had riots between the factions, a few assassinations, and no end of excitement. My chief, Major-general Emory, was perpetually being applied to, first by one faction, then by the other, for protection against armed forces, which both maintained. All the while their clashing were going on in Louisiana, and others in Mississippi, there were social activities in which the general and his staff were able to take part, and which afforded him and them many opportunities of meeting people we were glad to know, including a very few of the old residents, some of whom had been Emory's friends in the old army. Perhaps the most unique experience that came to me was that of serving at one time as *liaison* officer, between my chief, General Emory, and no less a personage than the famous former Confederate, General Longstreet, by that time wearing the uniform of a major general of the United States Army and commanding the Louisiana militia. I always had a great admiration for him as a soldier, and this brought us into very close relations. He interested me more than any other man I met in those days in Louisiana and I was glad of the opportunity.

The old opera house with an excellent orchestra, led by Calabresi, with a very capable company and chorus, was a joy to me. Mardi Gras was celebrated in famous style, our Nineteenth Regular Infantry, on one occasion, furnish-

ing all the oriental guard of the carnival king, just as in 1868 the horses and men of my old battery had appeared in the pageant of Lalla Rookh. Another great parade which annually took place in New Orleans was that of the firemen on the fourth of March, a spectacle never to be missed. Then, for a lover of baseball as I had been since we began playing it at Columbia in 1858, there were excellent nines in the Lone Star, the Robert E. Lee, and the Excelsior Club. I joined the last named, but found I could no longer bat and field as in '69, when being for some months on recruiting duty in Cincinnati, I had joined that famous club, the Red Stockings. It was that year, '69, that our team made the tour of the eastern states without losing a game, in spite of the fact that in Martin, of the Unions of Morrisania, New York, they were up against a curved pitcher, though he and they knew it not. Martin himself could not explain his strange power of baffling such batsmen as George Wright, Leonard, McVey, and George Gould. In '71, however, I had to take to wearing glasses and my baseball days were over.

But on the other hand, I was riding more than ever; it was the last year of the famous old Metairie Jockey Club, of which General Paul O. Hebert was president, and I saw the last four-mile heats ever run in the South, with Sanford's superb Monarchist as the champion. That spring of '72 was made rather interesting in New Orleans by the arrival of two young gentlemen riders, Captain George Rosenlecher of France, and the Count de Crenneville of Austria, who challenged any officers to an international race on Ladies' Day, April 9. A Mr. Stuart, formerly of the British Hussars, was eager to take up the challenge, a Mr. Ross, who had been in the Inniskilling Dragoons, was accepted to ride for Ireland, and Generals Hebert and Westmore of the Metairie Club, picked me to ride for America. I weighed 147 then, too heavy a weight for jockey work. Furthermore, the beautiful silken jockey dress, with white cord breeches,

and the dainty top boots (they and their spurs tipped the beam at less than 14 ounces when made) cost money that I could ill afford; but when even my general, Emory, said, "It's your duty, sir, to ride for the regiment," the matter was settled. The ninth of April was a gorgeous day. The crowd was big and the ladies' stand was filled as I never saw it before or since. I had had just three weeks in which to train—rising each morning at 3:30, walking briskly the six miles out to the track, mounting and riding two or three thoroughbreds, practising starts, etc., and training down to a weight a good five-year-old racer would not find too burdensome for the mile and eighty yards prescribed. The race was a beauty, and I won it against my belief, for both the Kentucky filly, Rapidita, and General Buford's beautiful Kentucky four-year-old, Nathan Oaks, had beaten my Natchez-bred Templo before and beat him after our contest. But what made that event something more than a mere episode in my life was the fact that two New Orleans girls were brave enough to wear a Yankee officer's colors that day. There were many who appeared in the gorgeous hues of Crenneville's and Rosenlecher's "cas-aques," and not a few were out in Stuart's cerise and blue, as well as a dozen in the green of the Emerald Isle; but it was too soon after the war, and Columbia's colors (my college before West Point) of bright blue and white, were worn, as I say, by only two.

The dainty, gold-mounted prize whip was presented by General Hebert immediately after we dismounted, and in less than five minutes thereafter it was laid in the lap of one of those two—the only daughter of old Captain Louis S. Yorke, of Carroll Parish, La., a famous sailor in his day—and within another year it had come back to me, with its new owner. It is here in Milwaukee now—so is the lady. We were married in late November, '72, and a year or so thereafter I had to leave her and our baby

daughter at the old plantation, all because the Apache were raising the mischief in Arizona. My troop was in the thick of the fighting, and I forsook staff duty in New Orleans; hurried over by way of San Francisco, then the quickest way, and from that time on it was Indian campaigning or Indian fighting for five memorable years.

There was service that called for everything a soldier had to give. In that warfare, whether officer or man, he had nothing to gain and everything to lose. There were no honors, no rewards, and in the actual fighting we had to win or die, mercifully if killed outright, by slow and fiendish torture if taken alive. I have written very much on this subject, and will not weary the reader with details. In command of thirty-five troopers and a pack train of hardy little Mexican mules, with a dozen Indian scouts, our young officers were sent into the mountains after the renegade Tonto Apache, and I had three or four lively brushes with them, in which we came out ahead, for my men were veterans by the time I reached them, and I eagerly sought and took the advice of the senior sergeants until sure of the ground myself.

By the autumn of '74 I felt quite at home in northeastern Arizona, and when one afternoon messengers came riding in to Camp Verde, with the news that a band of Tontos had driven off a herd of beef cattle from near the Agency, twenty miles north, I was glad to receive the orders of the post commander to take one lieutenant and thirty men, all he could spare, follow the trail, get the cattle and punish the Tontos. We started that evening, groping through the cañons up into the Black Mesa, hiding by day and trailing by night, and on the fourth evening, away up at Snow Lake, recovered the herd, after a brisk little skirmish, and the next day fought it out with the Tontos, away up in Sunset Pass.

This proved to be my last fight in Arizona, for one arrow nearly ripped out the left eye, and a bullet smashed the saber arm close to the shoulder. That is why baseball, boxing, rowing, and the sports I delighted in came to an end, and why even golf and tennis have proved impossible. For eight long years that was an open suppurating wound, discharging fragments of bone and proving a severe drag upon the general system; yet in spite of it, I managed to go all through our greatest Indian campaign, that with the Sioux and Cheyenne in 1876, in which Custer and so many of the Seventh Cavalry lost their lives, and even to be very active, for I had command of the advance guard the morning we surprised the Southern Cheyenne, near the War Bonnet Creek, close to the Wyoming, Nebraska, and South Dakota line, on the seventeenth of July. This was the fight in which Bill Cody, our chief scout, killed the young chief Yellow Hand, and we had to do some sharp riding and charging to save him from the vengeful dash of the chief's enraged followers. We had just got the news of the great Indian victory over Custer's command, and the Indians were in their glory. They fought with superb skill and confidence at first, but it ended in a general rout and stampede back to the shelter of the Agency, our seven troops (companies) close at their heels.

Two weeks later we marched clear to the Big Horn Mountains and reinforced General Crook, who had found the enemy far too numerous on the seventeenth of June. Later still we pursued to the Yellowstone and east to the Little Missouri, where our horses began to starve, and then came our turn, for the Indians—Sitting Bull's entire array—headed south toward the Black Hills and the unguarded settlements, and Crook led us, ragged and starving, after them. We had to eat our horses, three a day to each battalion or squadron, until we pounced on an outlying camp, with a big herd of fat ponies, near Slim Buttes, Sep-

tember 9, and fought all Crazy Horse's band and many of Sitting Bull's people, but had no more to eat our poor scarecrows. Fat, grass-fed Indian pony isn't half bad when men are hungry, as we were, without a hardtack or a slice of bacon left in the entire command.

At the close of that campaign General Merritt made me regimental adjutant, and as such I rode with him through the Nez Percé war the next year; that was as joyous as the other had been exhausting, for we had abundant supplies and gorgeous weather and marched through a most picturesque and beautiful country. But in '78 the surgeons said it was useless to try to keep up the fight. I could never pass the physical examination for promotion, could never swing a regulation saber again. The War Department was most kind and let me hang on until I reached my captaincy, and then placed me on the retired list for "disability from wounds in line of duty." The next year I was back in Wisconsin and its University took me in as professor of military science and tactics.

*(To be continued)*



**GENERAL CHARLES KING**

**From a photograph taken in the summer of 1921 at the close of the Wisconsin National Guard encampment**